

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs
May 2015

1. General Secretary Message: Let Us Help Nepal Together
2. SOP Alumni organize Peace Workshop for Youth in Indonesia
3. Leadership by Example from Myanmar
4. Peter Ho appointed as the new General Secretary of YMCA of Hong Kong
5. Share a Selfie with YMCA

Let Us Help Nepal Together

On 25th April 2015, a severe earthquake of 7.9 in the Richter scale hit Nepal severely affecting Kathmandu and other districts. As per Mutki Acharya, the General Secretary of Nepal YMCA, it was a black day in the history of Nepal. Many important historical monuments, UNESCO listed heritage sites, homes, buildings have been razed to the ground killing more than seven thousand people, injuring more than that. More than 8 million people are affected by this earthquake. Many corpses are still buried under the rubbles. In some areas, entire villages were washed away by landslides. People are seeking rescue in many districts of Nepal. At present Nepal is in the hour of need.

Nepal YMCA has mobilized young volunteers to implement the work. They started emergency relief operation in the most needed places where no organization and government agencies have been reached yet. In the first phase of relief work, Nepal YMCA is distributing, food, clean water, medicines. Blankets and tents too shall be added for distribution.

We have seen the news everyday over and over about the devastated areas and people crying for help there. The APAY and World Alliance of YMCA have jointly launched an appeal for international solidarity to help them as soon as possible. The communication and strategies will be coordinated by the World Alliance since this time many international YMCAs and organizations will be involved. Each day we receive a voice from the volunteers of the Nepal YMCA. Things have started moving gradually and many people have been reached although there are lots of unexpected hindrances, such as limited withdrawing of money from banks. I also heard that donation to the individual level were controlled by the government for some reasons.

We have received a lot of voices and prayers from all over the world. This is a time of solidarity and also we need to work together for the people suffering from loss of the family and safe place to live. We need to help those for daily needs and at the same time we need to plan and prepare for the second phase of rehabilitation once the first stage of distributing necessary items are over.

Thank you for your concern and support.

~ Kohei Yamada

SOP Alumni organize Peace Workshop for Youth in Indonesia

The village of Kalamalea hosted an interfaith workshop for youth to discuss ways to sustain peace in Poso, an area of Indonesia that has witnessed incidents of violence in the past 17 years.

Two School of Peace (SOP) alumni in Poso in the Indonesian province of Central Sulawesi, in conjunction with other local groups, organized a peace workshop from April 23 to 25, 2015, in the rural village of Kalamalea. Both alumni—Gunawan Primasatya, a Muslim man, and Suwarti Ningsih, a Christian woman—attended SOP conducted by Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) in Bangalore, India, in 2010.

For more than a decade, the people of Poso have had to endure episodes of violence. In the intervening years since 1998, this violence has evolved from fighting between the area's Muslim and Christian communities to bombings and other attacks by a small group of 20 men hiding in the nearby mountains. It is in this context that this workshop on sustaining peace was held for 20 Muslim, Christian and Hindu youth from the area.

During the workshop, the participants discussed the past and current situation in Poso and the efforts that have been made to bring about peace based on the experiences of the youth.

In addition, another 2010 SOP alumni, Tirmizy Abdullah from Mindanao in the Philippines, shared his thoughts with the group about religion and radicalism, and ICF staff member Bruce Van Voorhis offered an overview of the wars and other violent conflicts in Asia in the past century and asked the participants to reflect on why people fight wars and what are war's roots causes; the conditions that foster war; other forms of violence, such as poverty, the exploitation of workers, land-grabbing, domestic violence and environmental degradation; and finally, how to promote peace.

The workshop experience also included field visits to villages still facing conflict and to communities that have achieved reconciliation between Muslims and Christians.

The program concluded with the participants discussing ways to use the insights they had attained and other follow-up activities, such as conducting workshops in churches and mosques and using social media.

Among the aims and objectives of ICF are to build a network of youth working to address the injustices afflicting Asia's marginalized people, and thus, an important aspect of this program was that it was held at the grassroots level with the participants staying with families in Kalamalea—one of the first ICF programs to do so.

Another important feature of this workshop was the inclusion of a SOP alumni from another country as a resource person for an ICF national forum activity—again, one of the first times this has occurred.

~ Bruce van Voorhis

Leadership by Example from Myanmar

(Saw Richard Kaing, who was associated with APAY since February 1992, first as the Executive Secretary and later in various position in various segments of time and finally he concluded his engagement with the APAY as Movement Strengthening Coordinator on 31st March 2015. Here is a brief report of Richard's involvement with the Myanmar YMCA and APAY at large. We bid him good-bye and wish him a happy and healthy life in the days to come.)

Born in 1952, in the town of Thandaung in Myanmar. Saw Richard Kaing completed his primary, middle and high school education at Thandaung State High School, Karen State of Myanmar. Then he continued with his higher education at Moulmein College and graduated in 1975 with B.Sc. Degree majoring in Physics. During his university days he actively participated in University Christian Fellowship as UCF Secretary.

Soon after he completed his formal studies, Late Rev. William Lay persuaded him to join the Yangon YMCA in the year 1975, as a Trainee Secretary. He then served Yangon YMCA till 1985 as Program Secretary. During his tenure of service at the Yangon YMCA, he had the opportunity to visit the various local YMCAs in India for one month. During that time he came in touch with the Japanese YMCA Leaders who were also visiting Indian YMCAs with him. This fellowship later influenced the Japanese YMCAs to send study groups to Myanmar. While Richard was working as a Secretary at Yangon YMCA, he pursued his theological studies at Myanmar Institute of Theology and obtained the BRE Degree in the year 1980. During this time the Yangon YMCA was at its height amongst the eight local YMCAs in Myanmar.

Richard was promoted to the position of the National General Secretary after attending the 2nd Advanced Studies Program of the then Asia Alliance of YMCAs in the year 1984. He was the first National General Secretary (full-time) of the National Council of YMCAs of Myanmar. It was a period of struggle with limited resources at the National Council. Yangon YMCA provided a small room in its premises for the purpose of the National Council. The National Council was led by Prof. Tun Aung Chain as it's President, while the other members of the National Board were, Prof. William Paw, U Tha Sein, U Patrick Loo Nee, U Than Nyunt. U Ba Thauung Tin was the chairperson for the Training and Development Department. He and Richard travelled together on many occasions all over Myanmar to help the local YMCAs and provide leadership guidance to them.

During those days there were only three staff at the National Council including Richard, Jonathan Paw was the Program Secretary and Aik San was Office Staff. Rev. Tan Chi Kiong was the General Secretary of the Asia Alliance of YMCAs at that time, he had great interest in supporting small YMCA movements and visited Myanmar on several occasions to provide support to the National Movement as well as the local YMCAs in Myanmar. It has been possible for his guidance and support, the National Council of YMCAs of Myanmar could stand up on its feet. He mediated for the local YMCAs like Myitkyina YMCA and Haka YMCA to receive grants from EZE, Germany to construct their centers to run their programs. Within a span of six years, the National Council which started with a small room in Yangon YMCA, could have a four storey building of their own adjacent to the Yangon YMCA. The number of staff grew from three to thirty. During 1988, the World Council Meeting was held in Aruba, which Richard had joined but was stranded there for some time due to political uprising in Yangon.

Richard Kaing joined the Asia Alliance of YMCAs from February 1992 as the Executive Secretary for Leadership Development. During that time Phillip Jadav was the Executive Secretary for Program Development and the General Secretary was Mr. Tan Chi Kiong. Richard with his family were residing in the apartment at 7th Floor of the Chinese YMCA Building. During those days, few people from Myanmar had overseas job opportunities and their passports were valid only for a limited period and had to be renewed over and over again. One of his major responsibilities at AAY was to organize the Advanced Studies Program. This is a training program for senior YMCA secretaries of our region, though each year we have a couple of participants from other regions too. While serving as Executive Secretary, in order to cut down some expenses and exposure to Asian realities, the Advanced Studies program moved to

other Asian countries such as Thailand and Malaysia. These provided host national YMCA participation and their contribution as well. Another important training program for YMCA leaders was Community Development Training, which aimed to bring change in the community. Under the leadership of Bart Shaha, Richard was also given the responsibility to coordinate and promote Asian songs, with a title of “We come with Hope” to be used in APAY activities.

Richard continued his theological studies in Hong Kong, after the expiry of his service contract with Asia Alliance of YMCAs. He was studying at Chung Chi College at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and obtained his BD degree in the year 2000. He was working at the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong Resource Center.

After this Richard joined UNESCAP in Bangkok for a term of two years from 2001 to 2003. He was responsible to work with UN and the Youth and Social Welfare Department of the Governments of Asia for training the youth leaders in Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, India and Vietnam. Richard was elected as a Board Member of National Council of Myanmar. Richard was able to organize the youths in the YMCA and conducted various programs for the youth in the YMCA, he was also entrusted with the position of the Chairman of the Youth Committee in 2004. During that time he was also providing support to the research work for Mekong Migrant Network.

This was the time when the National Council of YMCAs of Myanmar was facing serious leadership crisis. In such a situation in the year 2005 at the Annual National Board Meeting, the Board decided to entrust him with the responsibility of the National General Secretary again for the second time. Col. Retired Aung Din, was elected as the President of the National Council along with the Board Members ; U.K. Khin Mg Myint, Dr. Tha Tun Oo, Brigadier Sein Lwin, U San Din, U Tin Aung Swe and Dr. Tin Hla.

During these days one of the great achievement was the recognition of the YMCA by the Government for YMCA program for the elderly people. The Govt. praised the YMCA initiatives to take care of the elderly people in the society.

After serving the National Council as NGS, Richard returned to Hong Kong in 2008. Dr. Bart Shaha was the Secretary General of the World Alliance of YMCAs then. He had appointed Richard to serve the World Alliance of YMCAs as the Coordinator for the World Council Meetings which was held in July 2010 in Hong Kong with over a thousand participants representing YMCAs from 124 countries. This was the biggest event he had coordinated and felt honored to be part of this important event of the World Alliance of YMCAs. Thus Richard in his YMCA career who started his work from the grass-root level at the local YMCA, served at national level, then regional level and then at last at global level too.

In Hong Kong, there are Christian students from Myanmar, who came for work or study. They had formed a Burmese Fellowship in late 1999. This group is called Hong Kong Myanmar Christian Fellowship. Dr. Sai Htwey Maung served as the President, and Richard served as the Secretary of the group.

In 2011, Kohei Yamada, the General Secretary of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs entrusted Richard to serve the APAY as Coordinator for Movement Strengthening, and the focus was on Cambodia, Indonesia and Timor Leste YMCA. Cambodia YMCA is a new YMCA, formed about 10 years ago. Richard made many visits to Phnom Penh for training and guiding the new YMCA. The NGS for Cambodia had been recruited and now Cambodia YMCA is in the way to be self reliant. In 2014 Cambodia YMCA was awarded full membership of the World Alliance of YMCAs.

Richard says that he have faced many challenges in his life, especially the YMCA life, but

some of them worth mentioning. The first challenge was taking the responsibility of the NGS of Myanmar National Council in 1985, without any resources he had up bring the National Council. The other challenge was to take the responsibility to compete the construction of the building of the National Council with limited financial resources. He shared that the key that made things possible during his service with YMCA was the "Team Leadership" and not only one individual's initiative.

Among the success Richard recounts, was at home, the program for the elderly people, which was widely acclaimed by the Myanmar Government and the second big success was establishing the National Council of Myanmar in 1985 almost from zero. Today the National Council have it's own office building, having a staff strength over fifty and a host of various programs. The establishment of Cambodia YMCA was also one of his great achievements.

Peter Ho appointed as the new General Secretary of YMCA of Hong Kong

Our heartiest congratulations to Mr. Peter Ho who assumed the position of the General Secretary/C.E.O. of YMCA of Hong Kong from April 1, 2015. He joined the YMCA in April 2014 as Deputy General Secretary/C.E.O. Peter was born in Hong Kong and obtained a Bachelor's Degree from University of Utah and a Master's Degree from University of Chicago. He comes with rich experience to the YMCA as he worked earlier in senior executive positions for the corporate world in North America, Hong Kong and China. He is married and blessed with two children.

Dr. Aldrin Leung, the past General Secretary/C.E.O., will retire on July 1, 2015 after serving for over 23 years at the YMCA of Hong Kong. He has taken up the role at the YMCA of Hong Kong as Advisor to the Board from April 1, 2015. He will return to Honolulu on July 15, to reunite with his family there. Aldrin is working on a Corporate Governance Manual project that he and his team have been working on since last year.

We appreciate Aldrin's invaluable contribution to the YMCA of Hong Kong through his leadership. We would also like to thank Aldrin for his unconditional support extended to the APAY during his tenure of service with the YMCA. We wish him a happy and healthy life in the days to come.

Share a Selfie with YMCA

Asia Pacific YMCA Youth Facebook campaign is happening again!

"Share a Selfie with YMCA and a Smile!"

We need your SELFIE with YMCA :

YMCA is a connected global movement. Now we want you to share it in a creative way!

WHAT TO DO?

- 1) Gather your friends at your YMCA;
 - 2) Take a selfie with YMCA logo, building, T-shirts, posters, walls, gym and pool etc.;
 - 3) Email your selfie, your full names and YMCA address to asiapacificymca@gmail.com
- WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH YOUR SELFIE?

We want to tell the World about the YMCA. We will select the best 100 photos and have an exhibition at APAY General Assembly in Daejeon, Korea from 7-11 September 2015.

DEADLINE

Please send your photo to us by 6 June 2015.

Not interested any more?